

# THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

## COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND THE ARTS

No. 3247.  
(See 3210)

Subject THE STUART BALLANTINE MEDAL

Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

Medalists

~~Inventor~~ Dr. John Bardeen and Dr. Walter H. Brattain

Address Bell Telephone Laboratories, Inc., Murray Hill, New Jersey.

COMMITTEE: 1951 - 1952

Dr. Winthrop R. Wright, Chairman

MEETINGS:

Dr. Charles B. Bazzoni

February 7, 1952

Mr. William G. Ellis

Mr. Edward L. Forstall

Dr. Albert F. Murray

Report presented to  
General Committee:

February 13, 1952

Final Action:

March 12, 1952

Approved by  
Board of Managers  
March 19, 1952.

Award Stuart Ballantine Medals

To John Bardeen  
Walter H. Brattain

Reports, Medals, and Certificates ~~presented~~ <sup>presented</sup> ~~forwarded~~ <sup>to Inventor</sup> Medalists  
Medal Day, October 15, 1952.

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA  
FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE MECHANIC ARTS

Hall of the Institute,  
Philadelphia, March 12, 1952.

Report No. 3247.

Investigating \_\_\_\_\_ the Work of \_\_\_\_\_

John Bardeen, of Urbana, Illinois,

and

Walter H. Brattain, of Morristown, New Jersey.



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THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

For the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts

- - - -

Hall of the Institute,  
Philadelphia, March 12, 1952.

Committee on Science and  
the Arts Case No. 3247.

The Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania, acting  
through its Committee on Science and the Arts, has considered carefully the  
work of those who have contributed greatly to the field of research in  
communication and reconnaissance, and has selected as recipients of the  
award of the Stuart Ballantine Medal for 1952 -

JOHN PARDEEN,  
of Urbana, Illinois,  
and  
WALTER H. BRATTAIN,  
of Morristown, New Jersey,

In recognition of their contributions to the theory  
of surface states in semi-conductors and of their  
invention of the Point Contact Transistor, a device  
foreshadowing a notable advance in the means of  
electromagnetic communication.



1           The Transistor is a "three-electrode circuit element utilizing  
2 semi-conductive materials" which is capable of amplifying input current, input  
3 voltage, or input power and, hence, may be used in place of the more usual  
4 vacuum triode in amplifiers, oscillators and high speed switching circuits.

5           The Transistor is the invention of John Bardeen and Walter H.  
6 Brattain and was made while they were in the employ of the Bell Telephone  
7 Laboratories. Patent application was made on February 26, 1948 but this was  
8 abandoned in favor of an application filed on June 17, 1948. This latter  
9 application resulted in the issuance of United States Patent 2,524,035, dated  
10 October 3, 1950, to Bardeen and Brattain.

11           The discovery was set forth briefly by Bardeen and Brattain in a  
12 "Letter to the Editor" in the Physical Review of July 15, 1948 (Phys. Rev. 74,  
13 230, 1948). In the issue dated April 15, 1949, there appeared a more complete  
14 discussion by the same two authors entitled "Physical Principles Involved in  
15 Transistor Action." (Phys. Rev. 75, 1208-1225, 1949.)

16           The last decade has seen a growing concern with the properties  
17 of the semi-conductors and the development of many devices which utilize these  
18 materials. The Bell Laboratories participated in this program, being active in  
19 both the experimental and the theoretical aspects. The discovery of the transistor  
20 is here presented in the light of the general growth of the "art."

21                   The Fourth-Group Semi-conductors.

22           The three elements C, Si, and Ge are all of valence 4 and, in the  
23 solid state, each occurs in a crystal form in which any one atom falls at the  
24 center of a regular tetrahedron with its four nearest neighbors falling at the  
25 four vertices of the tetrahedron. The bond between any two atoms is of the



1 covalent type, i.e., it is formed by the mutual action of two valence electrons,  
2 one from each atom. The core of the atom (i.e., the complete atom except for its  
3 valence electrons) is held in position in the crystal lattice. The valence elec-  
4 trons, in turn, are completely used up in forming the system of covalent bonds  
5 which bind the atoms in position. Hence, though the structure has both positive  
6 and negative components, there is no part of the system which is free to move  
7 under an externally applied electrical field and such crystals are essentially  
8 non-conductors. Carefully purified germanium, i.e., germanium in which the  
9 impurity content is only a part or two in a million, has a resistivity which  
10 exceeds that of copper by a factor of about 50,000. If, however, the impurity  
11 content is reduced to less than one part in a billion, the resistivity becomes  
12 about 30 million times that of copper.

13           The modern semi-conductor of the silicon or germanium type is  
14 presented diagrammatically in Plates I and II. In Plate I there is shown a two-  
15 dimensional array of tetravalent Si atoms, the covalent bond structure being  
16 indicated by the four sets of double lines which radiate from each atom. There  
17 is also shown in the assemblage a single atom of arsenic which has replaced one of  
18 the silicon atoms in the crystal lattice. Arsenic belongs to the fifth group and  
19 hence each arsenic atom has five valence electrons. Four of these valence elec-  
20 trons go into the covalent bond system of the lattice. The fifth electron is not  
21 held in the lattice and may move to the left under the action of the electric field.  
22 This motion results in an electric current and hence enhances the conductivity or,  
23 conversely, reduces the resistivity. The resulting material is called an N-type  
24 semi-conductor in that each Group V atom in the lattice may furnish a negative  
25 carrier. The impurity atoms are correspondingly called donors, since each furnishes



1 a conduction electron.

2           Plate II illustrates a semi-conductor where the impurity, boron,  
3 is a member of Group III. Each boron atom has only three valence electrons.  
4 Hence, when the boron atom enters the lattice, there is a lack of an electron in  
5 the covalent-bond structure. This gap is a defect or a "hole." By interchange  
6 of electrons between bonds, the "hole" may wander through the structure in the  
7 same way as a free positive electron would do. The actual displacement is one  
8 of interchange of electrons but the result is the same as if a fictitious positive  
9 carrier were present. Such semi-conductors are called P-type and the conductive  
10 process is called hole-conduction. The impurities are such as produce holes in  
11 the covalent bond system by accepting an electron each from the system and they  
12 are called acceptors.

#### 13           The Germanium Crystal Rectifier.

14           The crystal rectifier shown in Plate III is strongly reminiscent of  
15 the cat-whisker detector used in the early days of radio. Silicon and germanium  
16 crystal rectifiers appeared in general use during the last World War, their  
17 development being the result of research carried on at many centers of research.  
18 A typical performance curve for a crystal of n-type germanium is shown on the  
19 same plate. It is noted that, for applied voltages in the "forward direction,"  
20 i.e., with the point contact positive with respect to the base electrode, the  
21 current increases rapidly with the applied voltage. In the reverse direction the  
22 current increases much less rapidly and soon saturates. The rectifying effect is  
23 due to the lack of symmetry. As shown in the plate, there is a resemblance  
24 between the characteristics of the crystal rectifier and the vacuum tube diode.  
25 The inherent mechanism is, however, quite different.



1 It is evident, from the geometry, that the current density, for  
2 a given current through the rectifier, is much greater near the point contact  
3 than at any other place in the crystal. The explanation of the phenomenon is  
4 hence to be found in the conditions near the point contact. Experimental  
5 observations led to the conclusion that, when the point electrode is biased in  
6 the forward direction, it injects "holes" into the semi-conductor and that these  
7 account for the observed excess of current over that attributable to the negative  
8 carriers already present in the n-type germanium. Bardeen was led to consider  
9 this problem theoretically and in 1947 he published a paper on "Surface States  
10 and Rectification at a Metal Semiconductor Contact" (Phys. Rev. 71, 717-727, 1947).  
11 Bardeen's theory led to a systematic attack upon surface phenomena in the semi-  
12 conductors and, out of these experiments, came the invention of the Transistor.

#### 13 The Type A Transistor.

14 The introduction by De Forest of a third electrode in the neighbor-  
15 hood of the filament of a vacuum-tube diode resulted in the triode, the progenitor  
16 of the great array of thermionic vacuum tubes which are now available. The  
17 primary function of the triode is emphasized by the word "valve", a common name  
18 for the device in British parlance. The third electrode, the grid, is essentially  
19 a control device which requires a small power input but which regulates a relative-  
20 ly large power output in the cathode-plate circuit. The control is made possible,  
21 in essence, through variations in the electrostatic field in the neighborhood of  
22 the cathode, the electrode at which the carriers are set free.

23 While the underlying mechanism of the crystal diode is quite  
24 different from that of the vacuum tube diode, the close resemblance of their  
25 current-voltage characteristics suggested to many investigators the possibility



1 of a crystal triode with a performance characteristic similar to that of the  
2 vacuum tube triode. The difficulties may be illustrated by reconsideration of  
3 the two diodes shown in Plate III.

4           In the vacuum diode, electrons emitted by the filament build up  
5 a space charge in the neighborhood of the emitting surface which tends to limit  
6 the escape of electrons since, associated with a region containing such charges  
7 is an electrostatic field which acts as a barrier to escaping electrons. This  
8 field due to the space charge may, however, be neutralized by an externally  
9 applied field due to an array of conductors. In the diode this neutralizing field  
10 is supplied by the application of the proper potentials to filament and plate, the  
11 barrier field becoming less as the plate potential is raised with respect to the  
12 filament. For a given filament-plate potential, the net electrostatic field in  
13 the critical region may be varied by a potential difference applied between  
14 filament and a third electrode. In the usual tube this third electrode consists  
15 of a network of fine wires, located near the filament, which is called the control  
16 grid. Actually, control is possible even if the third electrode lies outside the  
17 evacuated tube in that the required electric field in the critical region is  
18 possible with a wide choice of geometry provided the proper potentials are used.

19           In the crystal rectifier of the type shown, the emitting electrode  
20 is the point contact which, with an n-type semi-conductor, "injects holes" into  
21 the region immediately surrounding it. In more general terms, the application of  
22 a potential difference between base and point modifies the potential distribution  
23 in the semi-conductor. This internal potential, however, may not be described in  
24 terms of the electrostatic fields of classical electrical theory but only in terms  
25 of quantum-mechanical states or levels and the control or modification of the



1 situation by the application of the proper potential to an external electrode is  
2 not feasible in the same sense as suffices for the vacuum-diode.

3 In the course of a general research program centering on the sur-  
4 face properties of semi-conductors, particularly in those properties which might  
5 be associated with the existence of a barrier space-charge at the free surface of  
6 a semi-conductor, Bardeen and Brattain first observed the Transistor action.  
7 Plate IV is taken from their first comprehensive paper which was published in 1949.

8 The three electrodes are the base and two point contacts, the one  
9 called the emitter and the other the collector. The emitter is biased positively  
10 with respect to the base, i.e., in the forward direction corresponding to high  
11 conductivity. This circuit corresponds to the filament-grid circuit or input  
12 circuit in the vacuum triode. The point contact is made wedge-shaped, the area of  
13 contact being perhaps  $10^{-6} \text{ cm}^2$ . The second point contact, the collector, is a  
14 similar wedge placed near the first, the linear separation of the two being of the  
15 order of  $1/100^{\text{th}}$  of a centimeter. The collector is biased negatively with respect  
16 to the base, i.e., in the reverse or low conductivity direction. This circuit  
17 corresponds to the filament-plate circuit or output circuit in the vacuum triode.

18 The currents in the two circuits are shown schematically in Plate V.  
19 In Figure a, the emitter is biased negatively (-0.25 volts) and the emitter current  
20 is zero. The collector is biased negatively (-25 volts) and the collector current  
21 of 0.8 ma. corresponds to saturation on the reverse portion of the diode character-  
22 istic of Plate III. In Figure b, the emitter bias has been made positive (0.14 volts)  
23 with a resulting current  $I_e$  of 0.4 ma. carried mostly by injected holes or positive  
24 carriers. These are deflected to the nearby collector and increase the collector  
25 current, in part directly to the extent of 0.4 ma. and in part indirectly through



1 changing the surface states in the neighborhood of the collector, thus increasing  
2 the electron current by 0.6 ma. In Figure c, the emitter bias is greater (0.16 volts),  
3 the emitter current rises to 1.0 ma., and the collector current has risen to 28 ma.

4 As a first approximation, the behavior of a triode may be represented  
5 by a family of curves of the form  $i_p = f(v_g, v_p)$  where, quite commonly, any one  
6 curve exhibits the plate current as a function of grid potential for a fixed value  
7 of the plate potential. The slope of any one of these curves corresponds to the  
8 partial derivative of  $f$  with respect to the grid potential and is known as the  
9 transconductance of the tube. If the curves are drawn so as to exhibit the plate  
10 current as a function of plate voltage for fixed grid potential, the slope of any  
11 curve is the reciprocal of the plate resistance. This simplicity results from the  
12 fact that the grid current is negligible to a first approximation.

13 In the transistor both currents and both voltages vary and the  
14 functional relations are more complex. The two voltages may be specified in terms  
15 of the two currents in the form

$$V_e = f_1(I_e, I_c)$$

$$V_c = f_2(I_e, I_c).$$

19 Plate VI exhibits measurements for an experimental transistor of the point contact  
20 variety (Type A). The collector voltage is plotted as a function of collector  
21 current, the emitter current being held constant. The slope of any one curve is  
22 that one of the four characteristic resistances of the Transistor which corresponds  
23 to plate resistance in a vacuum triode. The a.c. performance of the Transistor in  
24 a particular application may be computed, to a first approximation, on the basis  
25 of these four characteristic resistances.



1           Such a transistor may be used as a Class A amplifier, the base  
2 electrode being grounded. The input impedance is of the order of 500 ohms and  
3 the plate resistance about 20,000 ohms. The ratio of collector current to emitter  
4 current is about 2, there being some current amplification. The primary source  
5 of amplification, however, is due to the marked excess of output impedance over  
6 input impedance. For this transistor, the operating power gain may approach 20 db.  
7 and the corresponding power output 5 mw.

8           The above mode of operation of the Transistor is analogous to that  
9 for a triode with grounded grid. When the emitter is grounded, the performance  
10 resembles that of a triode with grounded cathode and, when the collector is  
11 grounded, the situation is like that of the triode used as a cathode follower.

12           The last four years have seen a great development in both the theory  
13 and the performance of transistors. The contact type transistor has been improved,  
14 partly by substituting single crystals for the polycrystalline plates used by  
15 Bardeen and Brattain and partly by modification of the contacts of the emitter and  
16 collector with the semi-conductor. The first transistors of this type were non-  
17 reproducible, their performance varied with aging and they had a temperature  
18 coefficient of about 1 per cent per degree centigrade. They are now produced with  
19 characteristics which vary from unit to unit to about the extent experienced with  
20 vacuum tubes, they are stable with respect to aging and the temperature coefficient  
21 has been reduced by a factor of four.

22           The most fruitful attack upon the problem, however, appears to be  
23 the junction type transistor due to W. Shockley. It was found that rectification  
24 was possible with single germanium or silicon crystals which had been so treated  
25 that one end of the crystal was of P-type and the other of N-type. With such



1 crystals, the electrodes may be of large area in that the rectification takes place  
2 at the transition boundary in the crystal. The system is much simpler from the  
3 theoretical aspect than that of the point-type crystal rectifier and Shockley con-  
4 tributed much of the successful application of Fermi statistics to the problem.

5         The junction-type transistor is, in essence, a crystal having two  
6 such transition boundaries, e.g., a germanium crystal with each end of P-type and  
7 the center portion of N-type. The three electrodes are plates attached to these  
8 three portions. The emitter electrode is at one end and is biased, with respect to  
9 the center electrode, at a small positive potential for forward conduction at the  
10 nearer P-N boundary. The collector electrode is biased at a much higher potential  
11 negatively for reverse conduction at its P-N boundary. The relation of the under-  
12 lying theory to the output performance of a junction-type transistor is clear and  
13 direct and the continued interplay of theory and experiment may be expected, with  
14 confidence, to yield transistors of still better performance.

15         The Morris Liebman Memorial Prize has recently been awarded to  
16 Shockley for his contribution to the development of transistors. It is believed  
17 that the work of Bardeen and Brattain and their invention of the contact-type  
18 Transistor is an important milestone in the history of electromagnetic communica-  
19 tions which may be judged quite apart from the subsequent development of the art.

20         The Transistor has reached the stage of practical application. Photo-  
21 transistors are now embodied in the new toll charge computers developed by the Bell  
22 Laboratories for the telephone industry. The Bell system has announced that large  
23 scale manufacture of transistors is under way but that applications in the trans-  
24 mitting circuits await the outcome of a test program which is to be started very  
25 shortly. It is understood that considerable application has been made by the armed  
services in devices used for both communication and reconnaissance but no details  
are available.

11.

In recognition of their contributions to the theory of surface states in semi-conductors and of their invention of the Point Contact Transistor, a device foreshadowing a notable advance in the means of electromagnetic communication, THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE awards two STUART BALLANTINE MEDALS, one each to WALTER H. BRATTAIN, of Morristown, New Jersey, and JOHN BARDEEN, of Urbana, Illinois.

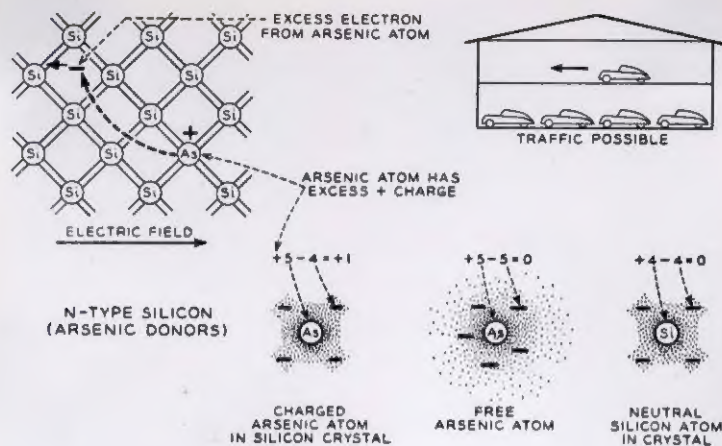


*William Ralph*.....  
President.

*Henry B. Allen*.....  
Secretary.

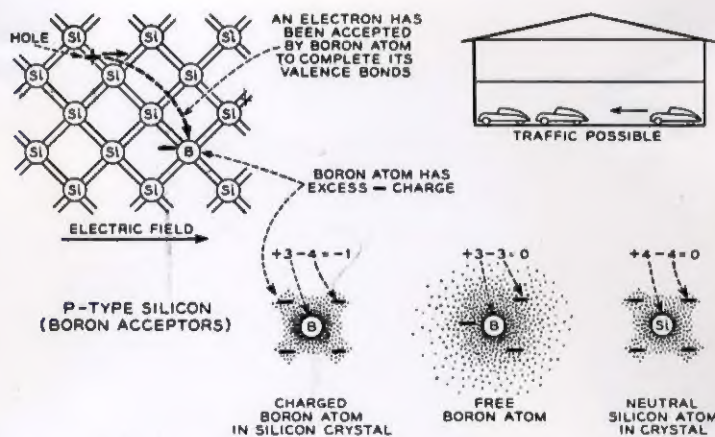
*Edward Stoertz*.....  
Chairman of the Committee on Science  
and the Arts.





S. & A. Case No. 3247,  
The Stuart Ballantine Medal.  
Plate I.

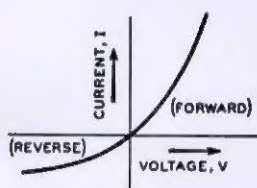
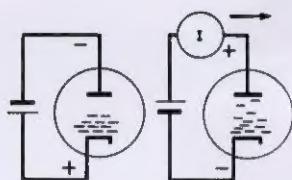
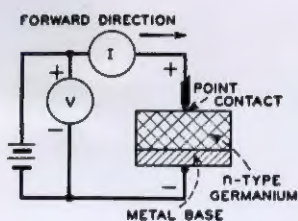
PLATE I.



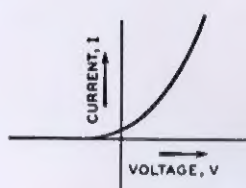
S. & A. Case No. 3247,  
The Stuart Ballantine Medal.  
Plate II.

PLATE II.





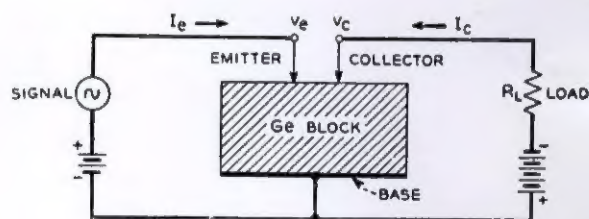
(a) CRYSTAL RECTIFIER



(b) VACUUM TUBE DIODE

S. & A. Case No. 3247,  
The Stuart Ballantine Medal.  
Plate III.

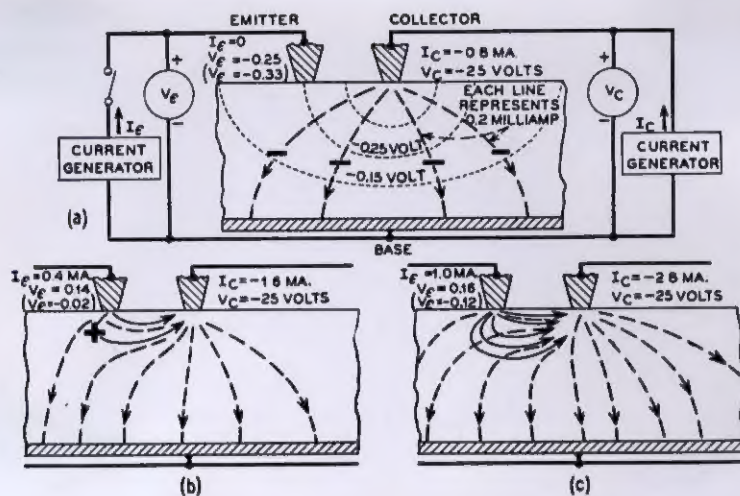
### PLATE III.



S. & A. Case No. 3247,  
The Stuart Ballantine Medal.  
Plate IV.

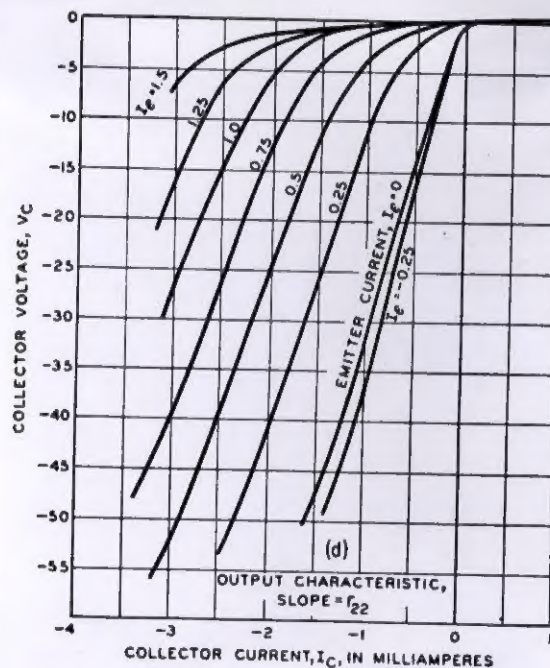
### PLATE IV.





S. & A. Case No. 3247,  
The Stuart Ballantine Medal.  
Plate V.

PLATE V.



S. & A. Case No. 3247,  
The Stuart Ballantine Medal.  
Plate VI.

PLATE VI.